Cluster: American Studies
Title of course: History of Jazz
Course Number: MUS 355 U
Proposing Faculty: Charles Gray
Cluster Coordinator: 
Cluster Course to New Cluster
Other clusters this course is assigned to: Pop culture
Non 'U' course proposed to Cluster Removal

UNST Committee-- PASS: Yes [No] [ ]
If no, reason: 

UCC Committee-- PASS: Yes [No] [ ]
If no, reason: 
University Studies
Cluster Course Addition
Adding an already approved "U" course to another cluster
(When addressing questions, please attach a separate sheet)

1. COURSE TITLE AND NUMBER: HISTORY OF JAZZ MUS 355 U
PROPOSING FACULTY (Name, signature, and department): Charles Gray, Music
TO WHAT CLUSTER ARE YOU PROPOSING ADDING THIS "U" COURSE?
AMERICAN STUDIES
FOR WHAT OTHER CLUSTER(S) HAS THIS COURSE ALREADY BEEN APPROVED?
POPULAR CULTURE

2. AVAILABILITY: WINTER, SUMMER
With what regularity has the course been—or will the course be—offered?

3. GENERAL EDUCATION GOALS: SUITABILITY & CLUSTER INTEGRITY
Discuss the place of this particular course within the cluster to which you wish to add it,
indicating how adding the proposed course will contribute to, while also sustaining, the thematic
integrity of the cluster.

OBTAIN CHAIR AND CLUSTER COORDINATOR SIGNATURES
BEFORE SUBMITTING

DEPARTMENT CHAIR(S): __________________________. DATE: 11/3/03.
________________________. DATE: __________.

CLUSTER COORDINATOR: __________________________. DATE: __________.

THE ORIGINAL + 12 COPIES OF THE PROPOSAL
MUST BE RECEIVED AT UNIVERSITY STUDIES (CH 163)
BY OCTOBER 31, 2003

PROPOSING FACULTY: Charles Gray

COURSE TITLE AND NUMBER: HISTORY OF JAZZ MUS 355 U

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COURSE APPROVED FOR CLUSTER INCLUSION
All changes to Clusters must be approved by PSU's Senate Curriculum Committee.

CHAIR, CLUSTER COORDINATORS: __________________________. DATE: ________.

CHAIR, UNST COMMITTEE: __________________________. DATE: ________.
Jazz is a unique American art form. Sometimes referred to as “America’s Classical Music”, it is a music with roots in the blues, African rhythms, vocal stylings and performance practices, and European harmonic theory and song form. It is a music that can be passed on orally with no printed music or strict composition, or it can be performed by large ensembles with elaborate compositional structures and instrumentation. It is a music that, unlike most others, celebrates the freedom of improvisation and the contributions of the individual while at the same time requiring the individual musicians to collaborate, compromise, and put the performance of the music above all else. It is a music to which it’s performers literally dedicate their lives, even though it generally holds little promise for great financial success or fame. It is a music whose history is linked with slavery, minstrelsy, Jim Crow, World Wars, the “Jazz Age” of the twenties, the depression, prohibition, the Harlem Renaissance, segregation and desegregation, lynching, addiction, the Swing Era of the thirties and forties, to name a few. It’s vocal stylings and performance practices have influenced all areas of American popular music.

A study of the history of jazz would address American Studies Cluster Goals 1, 2, and 3. Jazz is a major element of American popular culture, its influence is undeniable. As mentioned before, jazz has roots in minstrelsy and the blues, both significant contributors to pop culture. Jazz was the dominant popular music in America from the twenties through the mid forties, its influence is seen in almost all other American popular music from rock, soul, R & B, funk, hip hop, to country western.

Jazz is a most multicultural art form. It originally drew influences from African, European, and Hispanic music practices. As practiced today, jazz performers draw from and influence music throughout the world. At some point in it’s history jazz artists have had to address issues of race, ethnicity, class, gender, religion, and more recently sexual preference. One of the central points in performing jazz is learning to negotiate with the styles, personalities, and opinions of the musicians around you, all in the moment as the music is being spontaneously created.

Social and economic inequality are familiar themes in the history of jazz. It would be impossible to separate the effects of racial inequality and the development of jazz. There are also the social and economic effects of pursuing the career of a jazz artist in America.

A jazz history and appreciation course would fit well in the American Studies Cluster. Consider the following, copied from “Keeping Time: Readings in Jazz History” edited by Robert Walser.
Treasure
National
Rare
A Rare

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Official Articles of Culture Ignored